

Influence of Family on Deviant Behavior among Bachelor-Level Students in Kenya

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Abstract

University students' immoral behavior encompasses unethical misconduct, drug abuse, alcoholism, and irresponsible sexual behavior. Deviant behaviors in institutions of higher learning are linked to parental and family influence. This paper provides insights into the issues of deviant behavior among bachelor-level students in Kenya and how family influences such behavior. In Kenya, misconduct cases in institutions of higher learning are not new because factions of university students tend to believe that they can affirm their freedom through immorality. With such concerns, there is a need to establish the reason for deviant behavior among bachelor-level students and how family influence can be tailored to ensure that university students embrace acceptable behavior. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population was 16,421 university students selected from universities in Nairobi County. Using Yamen's sample size calculation formula, the sample size was determined as 390, but only 372 students were available in the four selected universities' main campuses and willing to receive the questionnaire. The study revealed that 53% of the students perceived moral breakdown in the family influences young people's adherence to negative moral values. A good number of the students, 46.02%, suggested that immoral behavior of parents/guardians and unfriendly upbringing influence deviant behavior among youth. Therefore, the study recommends that parents and guardians model the moral values they wish to see in their children and take the initial role of guiding their children on moral values. Christian-based programs can help university students deviate from deviant behaviors, and public education should be instituted to encourage youth to realize their self-value.

Keywords: *Behavior, Immoral, Bachelor's level, University, Family influence*

1.0 Introduction

Universities constitute the largest reservoir of technocrats in every nation's development. They are generally treated with respect, reverence, and dignity befitting serious minds engaged in intellectual adventure, discovery, and reflection. Universities are where ideas are pronounced, challenged, clarified, and disputed in the most dignified and collegial manner (Serlo, 2008). They have often served as the conscience for nations, reminding people in times of turmoil of the founding ideals of their countries and the aspirations of all people for justice, dignity, and equality. University students are, therefore, expected to demonstrate integrity, civility, and self-control to ensure self-disciplined and self-reliant citizens in the future.

However, some expectations seem untenable because many youths have lost their moral equilibrium. Often university corridors are thick with an atmosphere of drug and substance abuse, immorality, moral ambiguity, and extreme secularism. There is an ever-growing tolerance towards unprincipled practices such as egoism and premarital sex. Adultery and fornication are socially accepted as an alternative way of life among university students (Mwangi et al., 2014). In the United States, the "me-first" attitude, promiscuous sex, drug abuse, and illegal use of firearms have been identified as pointers to moral breakdown among students (Wanyonyi, 2014). European countries such as Britain are dogged with Students' ill-mannered behavior, such as broad cases of irresponsible sex, violence, and lack of familial concept. In India, youth are said to be losing their moral jetty. Increased drug use, violence, and sexual promiscuity signify India is sinking into moral decadence (Wanyonyi, 2014).

In Kenya, incidences of risky behavior among students have existed since 1908 (Opere et al., 2019). However, the media only reports a fraction of all risky behavior, over the past twenty years, a year hardly passes without reporting cases of risky student behavior such as substance abuse and riots. Taking a strange twist in the 1990s, riots in learning institutions in Kenya intensified. Ensuing violent incidences were not only violent and destructive but also premeditated and planned to cause maximum human and material loss. Crutcher writes, "Universities in Kenya are hot-beds for violent activities" (Crutcher, 2010). The University of Nairobi has been closed more than seventeen (17) times since the 1970s (Crutcher, 2010). Each closure always leads to the expulsion of some students, often bright young men and women who may not even have been involved in the riot but who, on account of being stigmatized as troublemakers, often cannot find other training opportunities later. Apart from the damage to the university's image as a source of inspiration and service, the recurrent moral crises lead to increased costs of running universities due to stoppages of instruction, a considerable waste of resources, and exacerbate the continuing strain of families who have committed a significant fraction of their meager resources for their children's education.

Problem Statement

Despite numerous measures put in place to curb youth misbehavior, Wiesner and Silbereisen (2003) claimed that young people continue to engage in criminal behaviors. The grim picture often painted by students in Kenya has created fear and anxiety. The observable consequences of entrenched social problems such as violent student activities often result in the destruction of property worth millions of shillings, unprecedented massive expulsion and suspension of students, the indefinite closure of universities, escalating levels of drug abuse, impolite code of dressing, opposite-sex relationships, jail time and sometimes even the death of students, pedestrians, and staff (Crutcher, 2010). All these indicate that moral values deterioration in the rising generation has permeated the web of students' lives.

As Barnes, Hoffman, and Welte (2006) suggested, participation in delinquent behaviors is likely to continue to increase, despite the effort of enforcing the law by police on campuses, National Youth Service Training, advocating for guidance and counseling in learning institutions, and expelling students who lack morals, unless we identify factors that have a potential of increasing the rate. The question then remains: How does family influence negative moral values among bachelor's level students in Kenya? Understanding the role played by the family in delinquent behavior is likely to put into effect social changes that will morally improve our societies and our nation at large.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research:

1. What moral values do bachelor-level students in Kenya cherish in their daily activities?
2. What parental factors influence bachelor's level students in Kenya to live in accordance with negative moral values?
3. In what ways do bachelor's level students' family influence their deviant behavior?

2.0 Literature Review

Theories of Human Behavior

People's moral behavior gives a true perspective of the development of any society or nation. The moral confusion in many learning institutions augments the need to explore factors related to moral breakdown among bachelor's level students. Over the years, philosophical, psychological, and social cognitive theorists have reflected on what determines overt human behavior, though none has perfectly explained why people behave as they do.

In 1943, Abraham Maslow, a humanistic psychologist, attributed human behavior to the desire to meet certain physical and sociological needs. According to Maslow's theory, human behavior is goal-directed. It originates from unfulfilled needs arranged according to their importance and power to motivate. The hierarchy of needs includes physiological, safety, belonging, love, esteem, and self-actualization (Altymurat, 2021). These needs create tension, which motivates people to act by first fulfilling basic needs before moving on to other needs.

In modern moral psychology, attempts have been made to explain how morality changes through personal development. Psychologists such as Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, Erikson, and Elliot Turiel have developed theories that suggest that morals develop through a series of stages, each defining the reason for a behavior. Lawrence Kohlberg, agreeing with Piaget, argued that an individual could become morally upright through the development of moral reasoning (Lerner, 2018). Kohlberg believed that reasoning power translates into moral power and sound reasoning translates to right moral behavior.

Weak family bonds, especially between children and their parents, can also be explained through strain theory, which suggests that individuals become deviant because of their inability to achieve positively valued goals (Hollist et al., 2009) and for every normal child to feel valued, supported and loved by their parents/guardians is a valued goal. When children do not experience this support and love, they experience frustration and anger, often leading to deviant behavior.

Family Influence on Risky Behavior

The family has a strong bearing on how children transition into adulthood. The family is the most significant factor influencing moral behavior among children and youth. Carlson (2012) claimed that if parents act negatively, their children are more likely to follow their parent's negative attitude. Laible et al. (2019) cited several family conditions generating persistent patterns of risky behavior in children. According to Straus and Donnelly (2008), the family's influence on children is powerful and affects future generations. Divorce has become a commonality in many societies. Children experience parents' constant fights, which often lead to divorce, which Amato and Cheadle (2008) claim cause direct stress to children, guilt feelings, and low self-esteem, which is a root cause of deviant behavior.

Many adults acknowledge their parents as role models, and their perception of right and wrong has been nurtured since childhood (Nsubuga et al., 2016). Practices such as an aversive and retaliatory model for problem-solving in the family incline children to risky behaviors to solve personal problems. Besides, the impact of the family situation on the youth's moral behavior is magnified when the youth perceives that their parental relationship is deficient.

Societal Influence on Risky Behavior

The moral fabric of many societies is frayed. Carlson (2012) observed, “the essence of social disorganization theory is that high delinquency rates arise when a community’s informal social control deteriorates.” Even though immoral societal behavior is appealing, the more adults in society take responsibility for supervising one another’s children, the more delinquency rates will go down, and the reverse is true. Reports of violent crime, drug abuse, spousal abuse, child abuse, disrupted families, and few adults to control youth's behavior place many youths at risk for developing risky behavior.

Many societies today have not only moved away from Christian foundations, but moral values are under direct attack, thus showing blatant disrespect towards God and humankind (Bandura, 1999). Rebuff of God's truth not only credits the astounding works of our God to the chaotic gods of chance, but it also has shocking effects on youths' moral behavior (Romans 1:18-25 NIV). Modern society has given youth the impression that personal conduct has no boundaries and that one can intentionally vent anger and frustration on people.

Jesus' Strategy of Teaching Morals

Jesus Christ, the greatest teacher ever in the history of this world, revitalized people's unconscious inner being through stories, mentoring, and modeling. Though His lessons were communicated without planning, they were revolutionary for the people who lived during His time and continue to be used in teaching the current generation. Crowds of people followed Him everywhere. They spoke about His powerful lessons (Matthew 13:54, Mark 10:24-26, 11:18, John 7:15 NIV). Jesus' teaching strategy suggests that moral values require more general guideposts and that moral sense is gained through thoughtful internalization of parables, proverbs, examples, and case studies.

Viable Ways of Teaching Moral Values

Many formal education systems have altered moral values teaching and openly advocated a relativistic approach to values (Quinlan, 2018). What was traditionally stressed as a non-negotiable moral standard is facing stiff challenges because of modernization (Dungy, 2012). The search for the best way of teaching values has preoccupied philosophers for decades. Several strategies have been employed for transmitting values in formal education systems. Superka et al. (1976) suggested five major approaches to values education, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Values Education Approaches

Approach	Purpose	Method
Inculcation	Instill certain values in learners. Change the values of learners so that they closely reflect certain desired values.	Positive and negative reinforcement. Manipulating alternatives, simulations, or role-play.
Moral Development	Help learners develop more complex moral reasoning patterns based on higher values. Foster change on the stages of reasoning of learners through moral discussions.	Moral dilemma sessions with small group discussions, not necessarily coming to a 'right' answer.
Analysis	Help learners use logical thinking in decision-making. Help learners use rational, analytical processes in	Rational discussions demand the application of reason as well as

	interrelating and conceptualizing their values.	evidence. Analysis of related cases.
Values Clarification	Help learners identify their values and those of others. Help learners use both rational thinking and emotional awareness to examine their values and behavior patterns.	Role-playing, simulation, in-depth personal values analysis, and out-of-class discussions.
Action Learning	Provide learners with opportunities for personal and social action based on their values. Encourage learners to view themselves as personal-social interactive beings and members of a social system.	Projects within learning institutions and communities.

Each of the strategies summarized in Table 1 has a view of human nature, as well as purposes, processes, and methods used in the approach. The inculcation approach fundamentally views human nature as a reactive organism. On the other hand, the analysis and values clarification approaches view the human being as primarily active. The moral development approach, championed by Lawrence Kohlberg, views human nature as alternating between active and reactive, while the action learning approach views human nature as interactive. A central concept conveyed by Christian literature is the fact that the whole process of teaching is value-laden based on significant relations. Mayer (1995) observed that factual claims such as exhortation and didactic instruction have little to do with values education. The lecturers' behavior is far more powerful guidance than their words. University students observe and evaluate their lecturers' actions based on how they make them perceive their words during lectures.

3.0 Methodology

The study utilized a descriptive survey design because it enables researchers to identify patterns in research data and develop an in-depth understanding of the problem under investigation without making conclusions about cause-and-effect associations between variables. Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) suggested that a descriptive research design is suitable for providing an accurate, descriptive analysis of the characteristics of the sample from the population. The descriptive research design is most appropriate when researchers do not have adequate knowledge about a research problem, like in current research. Hence, the design helped the researchers describe the participants' characteristics, like their experiences making moral decisions and the frequencies or trends of deviant behaviors among bachelor's level students in Kenya.

Study Population and Study Sample

The study population as shown in Table 2, involved 16,421 bachelor's level students taking the four-year undergraduate curriculum. Nairobi County was selected due to its metropolitan status. Students from every community are more likely to be found in the capital than in any other city in Kenya. Thus, research carried out in chartered universities in Nairobi County will likely bring out students' opinions from diverse cultural backgrounds. Selection of the university involved ten (10) chartered universities which only four (40%) were selected using the lottery method of simple random sampling. The names of the universities used are pseudonyms to protect the identities of the university.

Table 2: Study Population

Number	Universities
1	Maua University
2	Mumo University
3	Mwangaza University
4	Neema University
5	Peace University
6	Unity University
7	Upendo University
8	Ushindi University
9	Victory University
10	Wisdom University

Sampling Process

The researchers grouped chartered universities in Nairobi County into two categories, public and private universities. The names in each category were written on small pieces of paper and put in different baskets. Two universities from each category were picked. The two public universities picked were Mwangaza and Neema, while the private universities were Peace and Mumo as shown in Table 3. In the selected public main campuses, bachelor's students were between seven thousand (7,000) and nine thousand (9,000), while in the selected private universities, bachelor's level students were between six hundred (600) and eight hundred (800) in the main campuses. Mwangaza main campus students were approximately 8,002, Neema approximately 7,103 students, Peace approximately 705, and Mumo approximately 611 students, a total of 16,421. The Yamane's sample size calculation formula where $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$: n being required sample size, N target population, and e Margin of error (MoE) at 0.05 confidence interval: $16421 / 1 + 16421 (0.05)^2$ gave a sample of 390.48~390. The focus team leaders, the Chaplain, and the Dean of Students only managed to distribute three hundred and seventy-two (372) closed-ended questionnaires on various days and at times. Readex Research (2022) suggested that a small sample size fits the bill if the research seeks to represent the whole population. Hence, 372 distributed questionnaires were considered adequate for determining the pervasiveness of students' views regarding the family's role in young people's deviant behavior.

Table 3: Sample Population

University		Approximate Populations	Questionnaires	Percentage %
Public	Mwangaza	7,000 – 9,000	99	26.6
	Neema	6,000 – 8,000	99	26.6
Private	Peace	600 – 800	87	23.4
	Mumo	600 – 800	87	23.4
Totals	4		372	100

Since a Likert scale questionnaire is one of the most dependable methods of measuring people's opinions because they enable researchers to understand the complex views of research participants (Simms et al., 2019). The research used a 34-three-point Likert scale: always, never, and sometimes, to measure the extent to which students perceived families as influencing the deviant behavior of young people.

The research employed descriptive analytics in analyzing the data. Unlike other forms of data analysis, descriptive analysis does not make predictions about correlations between variables. It simply summarized the data in terms of the pervasiveness of research participants' views to make it more meaningful. This did not make it possible to make predictions about cause and effect, but the information is extremely valuable in suggesting viable ways of curbing deviant behavior among youth, who make up 70% of the entire population.

4.0 Results and Discussion

The research findings are presented in two main parts: questionnaire response rate and data collected in response to the three research questions.

Questionnaire Returns

Out of the three hundred and seventy-two (372) questionnaires administered, two hundred and sixty-one (261) questionnaires were returned (131) from public university-main campuses and (130) from private university-main campuses. Two hundred and sixty-one participants responded to the survey, constituting a response rate of 70.16 %, as shown in Table 4. The outstanding one hundred and eleven (111) questionnaires were not returned.

Table 4: Return of Questionnaires

Questionnaires	Number of questionnaires	Percentage %
Returned questionnaires	261	70.16
Unreturned questionnaires	111	29.84
Total number of questionnaires	372	100

Pervasiveness of Influencing Moral Values

The pervasiveness of family moral background influencing adherence to negative moral values was tested among the studied university students. Figure 1 gives a summary of the results.

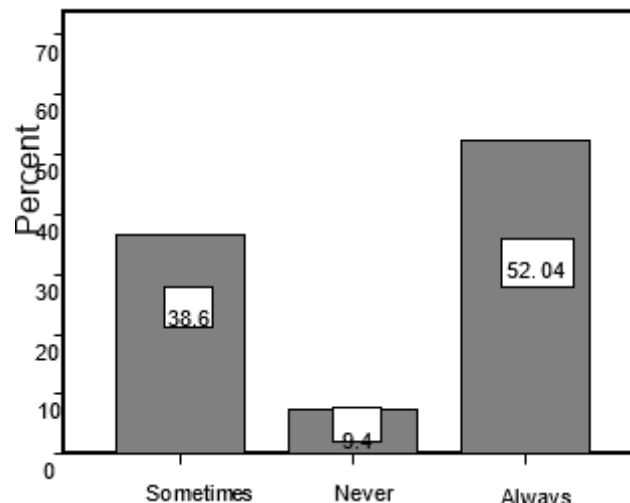


Figure 1: Pervasiveness of influencing moral values

Figure 1 indicates that (100) 38.62% of the participants perceived moral breakdown in the family as influencing adherence to negative moral values, (25) 9.42% perceived moral breakdown in the family as never influencing adherence to negative moral values while (136) 52.04% of the participants perceived moral breakdown in the family as always influencing adherence to negative moral values. The results indicate that the perception of family moral

breakdown is pervasive (52.04%) among the participants as a factor influencing adherence to negative moral values.

The pervasiveness of unfriendly parental upbringing as a factor influencing adherence to negative moral values was tested among the studied university students. Figure 2 gives a summary of the results.

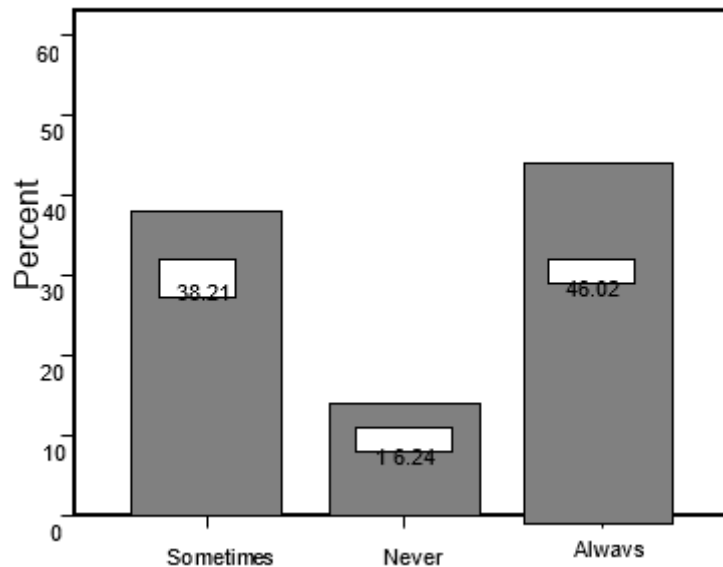


Figure 2: Influence of unfriendly parental upbringing

Figure 2 indicates that (98) 38.30% of the participants perceived unfriendly parental upbringing as sometimes influencing adherence to negative moral values, (41) 16.24% perceived unfriendly parental upbringing as never influencing adherence to negative moral values, while (121) 46.02% of the participants perceived unfriendly parental upbringing as always influencing adherence to negative moral values. The results indicate that the perception of unfriendly parental upbringing is slightly pervasive (46.02%) among the participants as a factor influencing adherence to negative moral values.

The pervasiveness of hatred among family members as a factor influencing adherence to negative moral values was tested among the studied university students. Figure 3 gives a summary of the results.

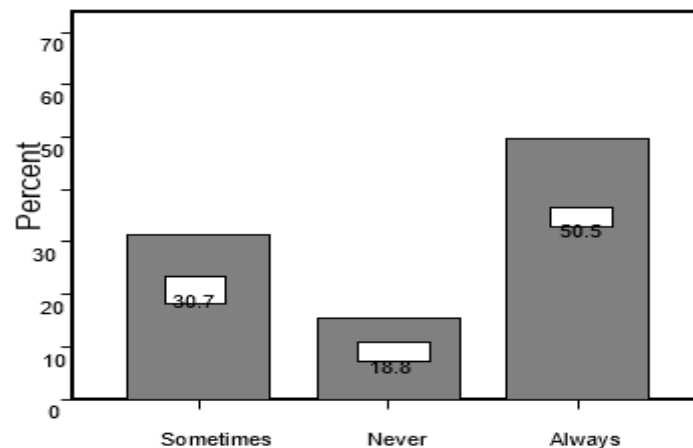


Figure 3: Influence of hatred among family members

Figure 3 indicates that (81) 30.72% of the participants perceived hatred among family members as sometimes influencing adherence to negative moral values, (47) 18.82% perceived hatred among family members as never influencing adherence to negative moral values, while (133) 50.54% of the participants perceived hatred among family members as always influencing adherence to negative moral values. The results indicate that the perception of hatred among family members is fairly pervasive (50.50%) among the participants as a factor influencing adherence to negative moral values.

The pervasiveness of unfairness among family members as a factor influencing adherence to negative moral values was tested among the studied university students. Figure 4 gives a summary of the results.

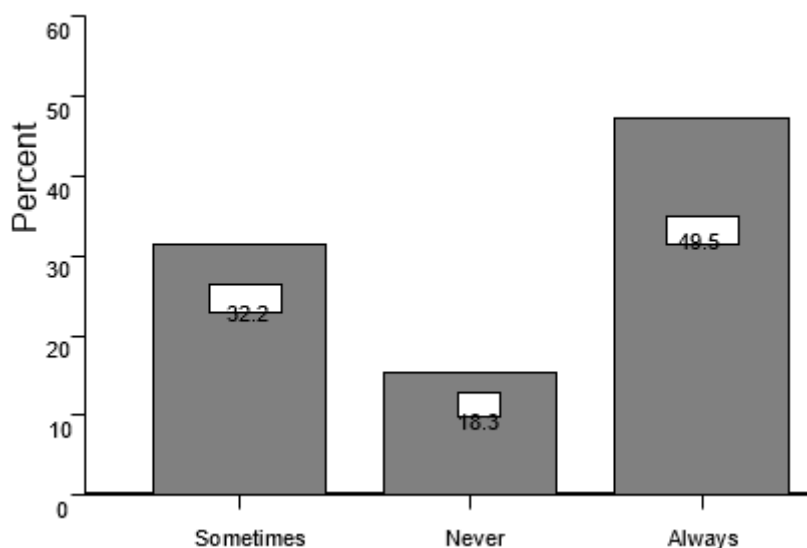


Figure 4: Influence of unfairness among family members

Figure 4 indicates that (84) 32.23% of the participants perceived unfairness among family members as sometimes influencing adherence to negative moral values (47) 18.31% perceived unfairness among family members as never influencing adherence to negative moral values, while (130) 49.51% of the participants perceived unfairness among family members as always influencing adherence to negative moral values. The results indicate that the perception of unfairness among family members is slightly pervasive (49.50%) among the participants as a factor influencing adherence to negative moral values.

The pervasiveness of family conflict influencing adherence to negative moral values was tested among the studied university students. Figure 5 gives a summary of the results.

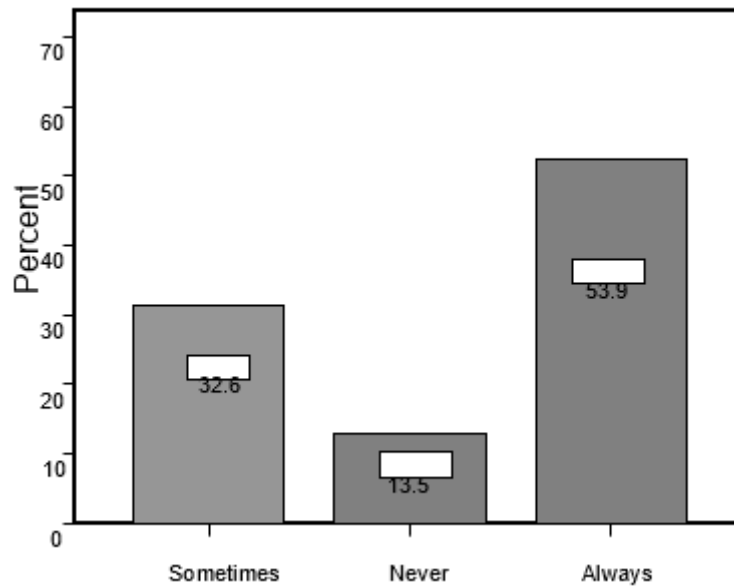


Figure 5: Influence of family conflict

Figure 5 indicates that (85) 32.63% of the participants perceived family conflict as sometimes influencing adherence to negative moral values, (35) 13.47% perceived family conflict as never influencing adherence to negative moral values, while (141) 53.91% of the participants perceived family conflict as always influencing adherence to negative moral values. The results indicate that the perception of family conflict is fairly pervasive (53.91%) among the participants as a factor influencing adherence to negative moral values.

The pervasiveness of family fights influencing adherence to negative moral values was tested among the studied university students. Figure 6 gives a summary of the results.

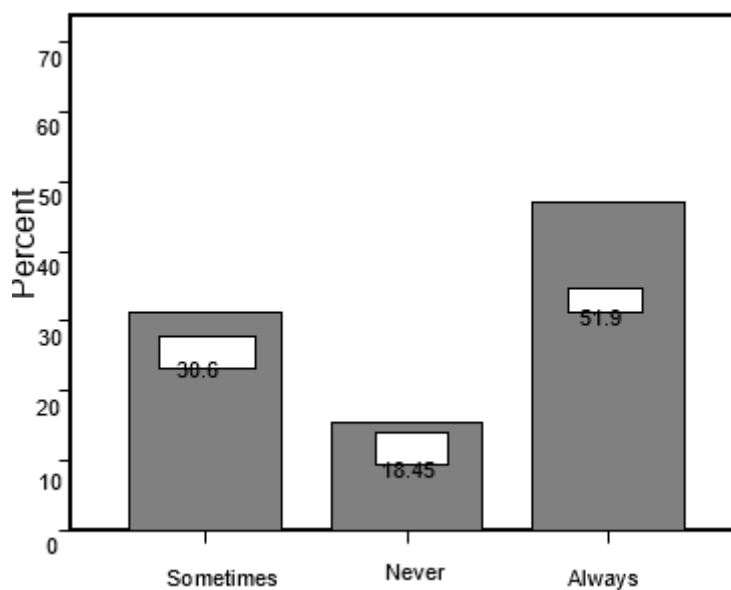


Figure 6: Influence of fights in the family

Figure 6 indicates that (80) 30.56% of the participants perceived family fights as sometimes influencing adherence to negative moral values, (47) 18.45% perceived family fights as never

influencing adherence to negative moral values, while (134) 51.91% of the participants perceived family fights as always influencing adherence to negative moral values. The results indicate that the perception of fights in the family is fairly pervasive (51.9%) among the participants as a factor influencing adherence to negative moral values.

The pervasiveness of parental absenteeism influencing adherence to negative moral values was tested among the studied university students. Figure 7 gives a summary of the results.

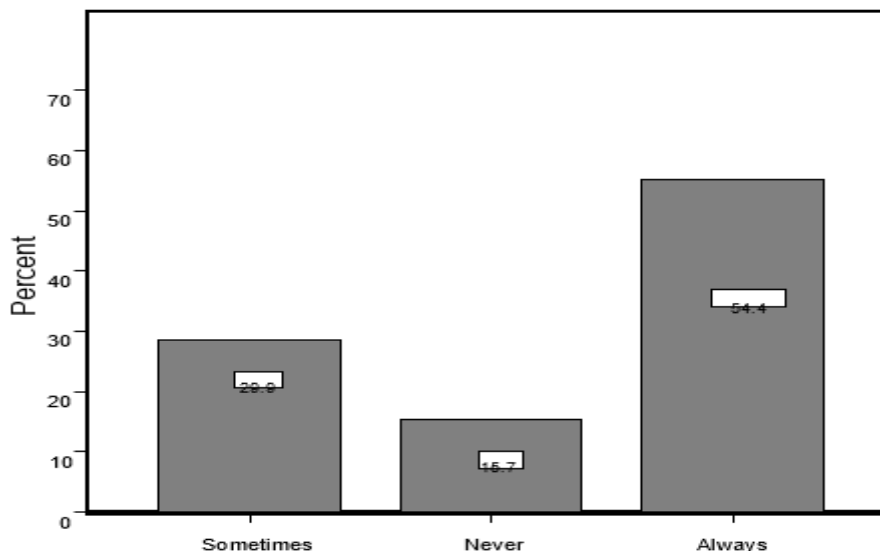


Figure 7: Influence of parental absenteeism

Figure 7 indicates that (78) 29.88% of the participants perceived parental absenteeism as sometimes influencing adherence to negative moral values, (41) 15.65% perceived parental absenteeism as never influencing adherence to negative moral values, while (142) 54.35% of the participants perceived parental absenteeism as always influencing adherence to negative moral values. The results indicate that the perception of parental absence is fairly pervasive (54.4%) among the participants as a factor influencing adherence to negative moral values.

Table 5 shows a summary of the participants' perceptions concerning sub-themes related to the family.

Table 5: Summary of the Participants' Perceptions Concerning Sub-themes Related to the Family

Sub-themes	Sometimes	Never	Always
Moral breakdown	38.6	9.4	52
Unfriendly parent upbringing	38.21	16.24	46.02
Hatred among family members	30.7	18.8	50.5
Unfairness among family members	32.7	18.31	49.5
Family conflict	32.6	13.5	53.9
Family fights	30.6	18.45	51.9
Parental absenteeism	29.9	15.7	54.4

5.0 Conclusions

Based on the current research findings, the researchers concluded that parental upbringing is a major contributor to the kind of people children become in their adult life. The moral breakdown in modern socio-environments and unfavorable or antagonistic modes of

inculcating values some parents or guardians employ are key factors influencing youth to cherish negative values. While children and the young more often follow their parents' or guardians' example and not their advice, some cannot find the appropriate adult role models and affirmations they are looking for. These conclusions echo research conducted in 2021 by Ansell, which found that children pay more attention to what they see than they ever hear. The conclusions are also in line with a literature review by Carlson in 2012, which claimed that parents indirectly and directly influence deviant behavior in their children. Parents' or guardians' behavior and actions are a "living-in-action" example for their young ones to copy, which means a deficit of good role models and moral guidance in the contemporary world is likely to continue to manifest in the form of deviant behavior and indiscipline among young people. The key ways that can encourage discipline among university students include:

1. Encouraging stable and meaningful relationships between contemporary youth and parents, contemporary youth and mentors, and contemporary youth and lecturers.
2. Creating a conducive social and cultural setting that supports moral behavior would enhance adherence to basic moral values.

The two suggestions echo Crosswhite and Kerpelman (2008), who suggested effective discipline, monitoring, and problem-solving techniques to prevent deviant behaviors because coercive parenting only exacerbates negative traits, hence influencing delinquent behavior.

Theological Implications

Contrary to utilitarian systems that hold that rightness or wrongness of moral behavior resides entirely in the good versus bad consequences, the Bible teaches that some moral behaviors are intrinsically right or intrinsically immoral despite the consequences (Matthew 5-7, 19, 22; Luke 3, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16; Mark 12). According to Luke 6:45 (NIV), no good behavior can emanate from a morally wrong value system. Immorality dwelling and reigning in people's hearts bring forth bad words and actions to dishonor God and themselves and hurt others. Malicious remarks about others, ethnic slurs, and off-color stories are clear symptoms of a value system needing review and improvement. Matthew 12:33-37 (NIV) teaches that the moral value system is the fountain, and behaviors are the streams. A troubled fountain and a corrupt spring always send muddy and vile streams.

The implication is that realigning the contemporary youth moral value system is gradual. The role of a lecturer is to nurture and to inform, as captured in (Luke 6:40 NIV). The Bible (Deuteronomy 11:19, Matthew 28:20, Luke 12:12, Titus: 2:11-12 NIV) suggests definite principles that must be socialized in learners. The command of Jesus to make the tree good and its fruit good in Matthew 12: 33 (NIV) could be interpreted as a contagious transformation that is likely to naturally reproduce itself in the lives of young people with environments that cherish upright moral values. This principle is true in academic knowledge and lifestyle to help contemporary youth add value to their lives because virtues are contagious.

6.0 Recommendations

Many participants viewed unprincipled practices displayed in the socio-environment as influencing adherence to negative moral values. This supports the research findings of Dreezens et al. (2008), which revealed that repeated exposure to certain values affects related behavior. It does seem that increasing the salience of a moral value has a lasting impact on contemporary youth's thoughts and behavior. In respect of these research findings, the following recommendations are suggested.

1. Since socio-immoral practices predispose contemporary youth to deviant behavior, parents and relatives must model the moral values they stand for so that youth know

- them. If contemporary youth know what moral values significant adults stand for and why they do so, many youths are likely to adopt modeled moral values.
2. Parents should not only care for their youth but also mentor and frequently speak to them about moral values and career choices during family meetings.
 3. The findings can benefit societies in many ways, such as creating educational programs to educate parents on how large a role they have in their children's lives. They can be taught how to parent effectively. The program can also benefit schools as it will help teachers know what factors to watch for in students
 4. Since youth are more likely to misbehave during after-school hours than at any other time of day, Christian-based after-school programs such as recreational opportunities, volunteer activities, and other organized non-academic programs would be effective deviant behavior prevention strategies.

Since this topic speaks to the core of every society's success, more research can be done. For instance, conducting longitudinal research that focuses on behavior from adolescence until adulthood. More factors can also be investigated that influence deviant behavior. Correlational research would also be beneficial to determine the strength of the relationships between studied variables and provide additional support for existing theories on the studied issues.

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